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Group Therapy: Ordering Paper, Receiving Cloth

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Group Therapy

Ordering Paper, Receiving Cloth

Column Editor: **Rosann Bazirjian** (Syracuse University)
Hey y'all out there! Do you have any gripes? Come to your therapist! Try rvbazirj@hawk.syr.edu or FAX (315) 443-9510.

GRIBE:

Submitted by **Brian McLaughlin**
(Syracuse University)

My gripe is about ordering paper bound editions, and receiving the hard cover editions instead. Here at Syracuse University, we very clearly and deliberately indicate paperbound ISBN numbers on our orders sent to vendors. We also include a "note to vendor" saying: paperbound edition please. However, we very often receive the hard cover edition, despite all of our attempts at clarity, and with no explanation from our vendors. Why is this? Doesn't anyone read our orders? If the paperbound editions are not available, is it asking too much for our vendor to say so when they supply the hard cover version?

PUBLISHER RESPONSE:

Submitted by **Maria Fitzpatrick**
(Manager, Wholesale, Library and Corporate Sales, Academic Press)

Why your particular vendor continues to supply hard cover editions when paper has been clearly requested, and is available, I do not know. Perhaps you should make a call to your vendor rep; ask if they can recommend another vendor, one that reads orders and follows instructions . . .

Your customer profile may also be to blame.

There was a time when libraries shunned paper editions and opted exclusively for the case. As you are well aware, in recent years budget constraints have prompted a variety of changes in library acquisitions. For this reason, both library and vendor Customer Profiles should be updated to reflect current needs and trends. Academic Press has a few remaining Standing Order Profiles on file, most of which indicate NO PAPER. In compliance, our system automatically

generates a shipping document for case only, even if paper happens to be the edition of choice.

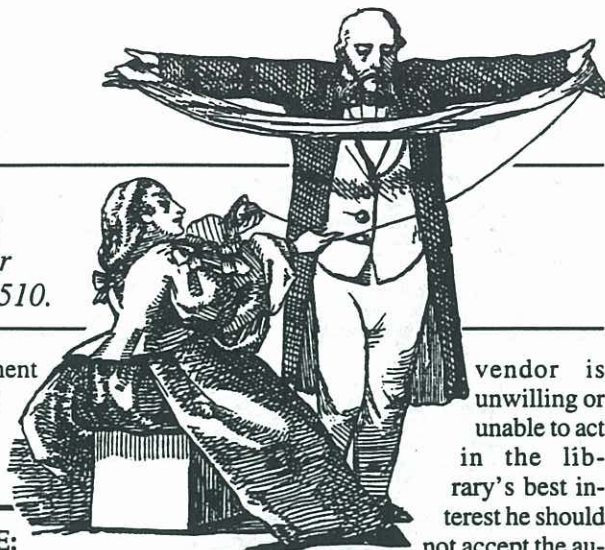
VENDOR RESPONSE:

Submitted by
Carolyn M. Wiker
(Customer Service Supervisor,
Franklin Book Company)

[Editor's note: Franklin Books is not the vendor being referred to in the gripe!—RB]

At times the easiest answer is the correct answer for both the customer and supplier! Supplying an unwanted book generates a return that both the library and vendor must process. A policy to supply what one happens to stock without regard to the specific order seems counterproductive to Franklin's management and staff. The whole exercise makes extra work for everyone and aggravates the relationship with the customer. After the return, the vendor then incurs the additional work of repairing the relationship, issuing a credit, reordering the book, returning the book and supplying the correct volume. The library must account for the credit and again process the book. I'm opposed to extra work.

In our view, a key element to facilitate the delivery of the correct book as frequently as possible is the customer profile. When we receive the customer's first order, we interview the customer to clarify their normal service preferences. One issue discussed during the initial-ization of the account is the latitude given to Franklin to substitute the binding type. When latitude is granted, we interpret the authority to be limited, allowing substitution only when the binding type is not available in either our warehouse or the publisher's warehouse. When a library gives a vendor authority to make decisions for them, the vendor must act in the library's best interest, even if that decision differs with his position. If the



vendor is unwilling or unable to act in the library's best interest he should not accept the au-

thority to act. If the distributor substitutes a binding type, his act says to the library that the desired product is not available in his warehouse or in the publisher's warehouse.

At Franklin it is our intent to supply the exact book our customer requests. It is also our philosophy that the customer has every right to expect as much. Our customer profile indicates whether a library requires written or oral confirmation before the substitution of a binding type. Since our customer profile is an interactive program, changes instantly update. If not granted the authority to substitute binding type, we notify the customer when we become aware of the necessity for a substitution. If the publisher notifies us before shipment, our communication may take the form of an informational message requesting permission to substitute. For a rush order or an item substituted by the publisher without consultation, we telephone the customer. With specific or general authority, we include a stamped note in the book to inform them of the unavailability of the hardback or paperback format as appropriate.

On occasion the library may have sent a mixed message; the ISBN is for the hardback, yet the order or customer profile says paperback binding when available. In this instance, we believe it best to call the library for clarification. The telephone call is the most economical way of resolving quickly the conflicting information.

To condense the previous five paragraphs to two sentences, at Franklin we try to supply the format the customer wants. If we can't, we follow the customer's established guideline to substitute or request their confirmation of the acceptability of the available format. ☼